GEELONG NATURALIST

MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE GEELONG FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB INC

11 JUL 2000

Vol. 36 No. 3
ISSN 0726-7363

JULY 2000

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COMING EVENTS

JULY			
4	General Meeting		Speaker: Margaret Cameron "Mali"
9	Biodiversity Excursion		Wetlands - Colac
9	Winter Wader Count		
11	Plant Group		
12	Biodiversity Group Workshop		
16	Excursion		Portarlington Sewage Works, Point Richards Leaders: Peter Bright and Ray Baverstock
18	Bird Group		Simon Kennedy "Swift Parrots"
20	Bird Group Excursion	+	Murtnaghurt - Leader: Caroline MacAfee
AUG 1	General Meeting		Member's Night plus Peter Byrne from Barwon Water
6	Biodiversity Excursion		
8	Plant Group		
9	Biodiversity Group Workshop		
TBA	Boneseed Pull		You Yangs
15	Bird Group		"Speckled Warblers" Marilyn Hewish
17	Swan Island		
20	Excursion		Gellibrand Quarry & Axe Grinding Stone Leaders: Mal Gardiner, Bernie Franke

\+ ADDITIONS TO PROGRAM

GFNC Web page http://member.austasia.net/~gfnc
Email address: gfnc@mail.austasia.net
Editor's email address: cndgreenwell@myplace.net.au

PUT THESE DATES IN YOUR DIARY!
August 5th and 6th

Olympic Landcare 2000 Treeplanting at Belmont Common

Together with the Geelong Environment Council and the Friends of Belmont Common, the Club obtained a grant for this project. It is the first stage in the restoration of the Belmont Common and this time we are working **with** the City of Greater Geelong. Barwon Water is donating the trees and preparing the site. We have chosen an area close to the existing walking track and north of the golf course. It contains a small wetland which will become the focal point. The planting will be dedicated to former Olympian John Landy.

It is to be a highly publicised community event and we would like Club members to set our usual good example.

Tonight's speaker...

Margaret Cameron will be telling us about "**MALI,**" which is mostly Sahara Desert but has more than 600 bird species. It also has the mighty Niger River and the fabled city of Timbucktoo.

Next month's speaker...

will be Peter Byrne from Barwon Water. Donna Wood will be chairing the meeting.

EXCURSION NOTICE

Date: July 16, 2000
Portarlington Sewage Ponds
Leaders: Peter Bright and
Ray Baverstock

Depart Karingal 9.00 a.m. sharp. Meet at the corner of the Portarlington-Queenscliff Road intersection with Coatsworth Rd (opp. Scotchmans Hill Rd) at 9.30 a.m. Proceed to the sewage ponds. The afternoon's activities will depend on the weather; if it's not a howling northerly, Point Richards may be a good spot!

Also on the notice board...

VFNCA SPRING 2000 CAMP OUT
Based at Kismet Riverside Lodge, Howlong
October 12th to 15th
Host- Albury Wodonga Field Naturalists' Club.
(Further details to come.)

———

Valda has passed on two concept drawings from the Barwon River Users Group (RUG), for our information, one is of the proposed widening of the Barwon River to allow 5 rowing lanes and 1650 metre events, and the second is an extension to Landy Field which will change the walking track between the Field and the Barwon River to include three boardwalks which will not be good for cyclists.

Please would you give careful consideration to offering your services as President so that the Club can function efficiently.

The Committee will assist and guide you; however, if you have previous experience with the Club committee, it would help you enormously.

Claire Greenwell, Chairman for the month.
(If I can do it - you can do it.)

Although information was sent out in response to enquiries, there were no new members this month.

The best way to attract new members is usually by word of mouth. Grab a couple of spare Programs and keep them in your jacket, backback or handbag for those chance occasions.

Please note that the closing date for the next magazine will be Monday evening, 24th July, 2000
Early lodgement of articles (small & large) would be a great help - late copy may not get in.
Hard copy (for scanning) or diskette to: 4 White Street, Belmont, 3216
Email: cndgreenwell@myplace.net.au
Phone: 03 5243 7047 or 0409 723022

OUT AND ABOUT WITH VALDA
. . . Valda Dedman

Insect Orchids, He-oaks and She-oaks, Hairy Caterpillar, Turkeys and Geese, Bird Pudding, Local Indigenous Plants, A New Book.

Winter is insect time, not the flying sort, but the insect-orchids - Mayfly, Mosquito and Gnat. They are easy to distinguish when flowering, but difficult at other times because they all have somewhat heart-shaped leaves. True orchid buffs can distinguish them by the leaves. How do we lesser mortals know which is which?

- **Gnat** Orchid *Cyrtostylis* leaves hug the ground, are green above and below and are obviously veined.
- **Mayfly** and **Mosquito** Orchid *Acianthus* leaves enclose the flower stem above the soil surface (but appear before the stem) and are, mostly, green above and red-brown below.
- **Mayflies** have fluted edges but mosquitos are "entire" (no notches)

On a recent walk along the Bellarine Rail Trail, it was easy to pick the "he-oaks" from the "she-oaks", just by looking at the ground. The area beneath the female Drooping Sheoaks was littered with recently shed cones, whereas male trees seemed to be growing in a golden carpet made up of spent flowers. Until 1982 *Allocasuarina verticillata* was known as *Casuarina stricta*. One of the ways to tell the difference between casuarinas and Allo (=other)casuarinas is by their seeds. Casuarinas have pale, dull-coloured seeds, grey or yellow-brown. "Other" casuarina seeds are shiny and red-brown to black. Take a walk this month along part of the Rail Trail. The wattles will be starting to flower. Good starting points where there are stands of remnant native vegetation are Swan Bay Road, Christies Road or Hermsley Road.

We also found a hairy caterpillar, probably *Pernattia expositi*, on a male sheoak. This species lives only on sheoaks and after pupating in a papery cocoon, develops into a hairy heavy-bodied moth.

From the *Geelong Advertiser* July 28, 1875:

Some ten days ago one of these wild turkeys was shot near the Half-way House, Warrambine Creek, and on being opened not less than four snakes, each about one foot in length, were found in a tolerable state of preservation in its gizzard. These are now to be seen, preserved in spirits, at the above-named hostelry. I have only to add that, notwithstanding the snakes, the bird was demolished, and the family felt no ill effect.

The early settlers were very fond of native turkeys, or bustards, but did they have to eat them all? The birds were common if left alone. They were plentiful at the Austin property, Avalon Station, where they nested and 83 birds were once counted within a mile of Murdeduke Station homestead.

The settlers also ate wild geese, which were plentiful in the Geelong district, but like the bustard, became locally almost extinct, because they were capital eating and fetched from 12s to 15s per pair in the Melbourne markets. It is good to hear of a large number of Cape Barren Geese out Hesse way, and that Magpie Geese may again be found on the Bellarine Peninsula. The Magpie Goose, *Anseranas semipalmata* is neither a Magpie nor, according to some bird experts, a true goose. Unique to Australia, it is in a family all of its own and its scientific name is a combination of the latin words for both goose and duck. Its feet are semipalmated, that is half-webbed, and with claws. Magpie Geese rarely swim and are never completely flightless, since their annual moult is progressive. It didn't stop them them being shot.

Make a bird pudding for winter. Melt some dripping, add a few dollops of honey, enough birdseed, brose meal (or dried peas or lentils that you have disintegrated in the blender) until you have a stodgy mess. Add bread, cake crumbs or oatmeal if necessary. Place in the refrigerator or freezer until solid. Turn out and put in a net bag (the sort onions or lemons come in) and hang outside a window where you can watch the birds feed. Take care that it is out of cat access. It may take some time before the birds find it, and then you may only get sparrows or wattlebirds, but there is a good chance that rosellas will come and maybe an Olive Whistler will visit, as happened to me in the winter of 1981 and 1982.

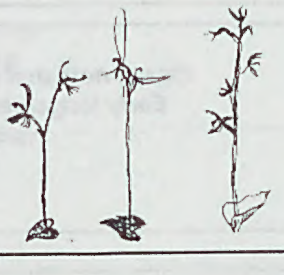
The rain has made my "dead" lawns grow again after a summer of watering restrictions. A few patches survived, which consisted of Weeping Grass *Microlaena stipoides*. This had grown from grass seeds collected on our socks from the Pollocksford native grasslands. The seeds are persistent two-pronged, pesky little things, but obviously survivors. If we must have lawns, perhaps we should be trying more natives. We have found that Wallaby Grass *Danthonia setacea* can form a nice sward that improves with mowing, provided you let it seed from time to time.

If you would like to find out more about the indigenous plants of your part of Geelong, I suggest you pick up the appropriate information sheet from your local COGG Service Centre. You will get a snapshot of the original vegetation. Note how the plants are related to the geology, soil type and rainfall.

I didn't see the humpback whales in Corio Bay, but it wasn't for lack of trying. Lucky Joe Hubbard will tell you about them.

If you want to indulge yourself, buy Graham Pizzey's new book, *Journey of a Lifetime*. It is a collection of his nature writings, told with style and understanding, which will give you a new insight on various aspects of the natural world. After reading it, you might want to rush out and plant a Sweet Bursaria. This shrub is on all the Geelong lists, too.

And I'm off this month on a journey of my own, to outback Queensland, and I hope to share some of my experiences with you later on.



Frogs of the Geelong Region

...Ade Foster

8 Hazel Street, Belmont. 3216

Brown Tree-frog *Litoria ewingi*

With the recent rains, frogs have begun calling again. The very dry weather of the past couple of years seems to have kept them quiet, but three species were calling from my back yard pond this week, the most pleasing of which is the Brown or Ewing's Tree-frog, *Litoria ewingi.*

Brown Tree-frogs are smallish, reaching about 35mm, pale brown or fawnish above and cream or white below. The back is usually marked with dark brown spots and there is a distinct blackish stripe extending from the nostrils, through the eye to the flank. The skin inside the thighs is often a warm orange. The belly skin is unmarked.. They have the toe discs typical of tree frogs, but these are small and scarcely wider then the toes.

They are found across south eastern Australia from south eastern South Australia through Victoria to southern New South Wales. They are also widely distributed through Tasmania. They are found in coastal swamps, lagoons, dry sclerophyll forests, wet sclerophyll forests, grasslands.... and suburban gardens where suitable habitat occurs. It was introduced to New Zealand in 1875.

The call is a a high pitched whistle - "weep .. eep .. eep .. eep .. eep", which, in a good season can be heard all year round. Males call from low vegetation bordering water or while floating among aquatic plants. After a good summer or autumn rain, the chorus can be very loud indeed, and females can be attracted to the pond from as far as one hundred metres away. The male grasps the female under the armpits and rides her as she swims into the water to lay her eggs among the vegetation. He does this with the aid of spiky pads on the inside of the first finger, called nuptial pads. These differ between species and can be very small or quite spectacular.

The eggs are coated with a substance which swells on contact with the water to form a substance very much like clear jelly, and the female lays short strings of these eggs attached to plants stems and the like. The tadpoles hatch after a few days, depending on water temperature, and grow very quickly. Metamorphlings are striped green and cinnamon brown but this colour lasts only a few days. There is reportedly a green colour phase of *L. ewingi*, but, though I have kept and bred them for many years, I have yet to see a green one.

References:-

Cogger, H.G. (1994) *Reptiles and Amphibians of Australi,* Reed Publishing, Chatswood, NSW
Robinson, Martyn (1995) *A Field guide to Frogs of Australia,*Reed Books, Australia
Tyler, M.J. (1976) *Frogs,* Collins, Sydney, NSW

GEELONG FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB
REEDY LAKE STUDY

... Report compiled by Trevor Pescott
(for the Reedy Lake Study Group)

14 Victoria Terrace, Belmont, 3216.

Our bi-monthly surveys continued through 1999. The following report covers the results of these counts.

For the background into the study and previous reports, see *Geelong Naturalist* Vol.33 No.10, March 1998 and Vol.34 No.10, March 1999.

11. Thursday 11 February, 1999

Water level at regulator 0.3m, appears to have fallen during the last week.
Weather overcast, hot, strong breeze ENE.
Water temperature 18°C(surface) 18°C(at 0.3m depth).
Water turbidity - visibility greater than depth of 0.3m.

Amphibians
None recorded.

Fish
Mosquito fish *Gambusia affinis* common and Southern Pygmy Perch *Nannoperca australis* uncommon were caught in hand-nets in the outlet channel above the regulator.

Invertebrates
Damselfly larvae (*Synlestes sp.*) and the fly *Astralimyza sp.* were common, but aquatic invertebrates were generally uncommon.

Birds
41 species, several thousand individuals.
Waterfowl were in good numbers with over 1000 teal on the Big Hole. Black Swans (6), were very scarce.
Waders were plentiful - Masked Lapwing (103), Lathams Snipe (3), Black-winged Stilt (62), Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (60) and Greenshank (86).
Other birds of interest were Stubble Quail (2), Australian Crake (1) and the large numbers of Golden-headed Cisticolas (100+), White-fronted Chats (172 with one flock of 50-60 birds) and Superb Fairy-wrens.

Vegetation
A dense carpet of water-buttons *Cotula sp.* has existed on the shallows off Fitzgeralds Road. Cumbungi is regenerating well as are some sedges and blown grass.

12. Thursday 8 April, 1999

Water level at regulator 0.52m.
Weather warm, cloudy, clearing during morning.
Water Temperature 14°C (surface) 12°C(at 0.5m depth).
Water turbidity - visibility beyond current depth.

Amphibians
Common Southern Froglet *Ranidella signifera* plentiful.

Fish
Mosquitofish *Gambusia affinis* common, Dwarf Flat-headed Gudgeon *Philypnodon sp.* uncommon.
Many small fish of several species including Yellow-eyed Mullet were in the river immediately below the lower breakwater, also many large European Carp.
On 9 April, a follow-up visit resulted in two 20cm long European Carp being caught in the outlet channel immediately upstream of the regulator, i.e. in Reedy Lake itself.

Invertebrates
Generally in much larger numbers than in February. Seed Shrimp (a species of Candonidae) and the Freshwater Shrimp *Caridinides wilkinsi* were common as were the bugs *Naucoris sp.* and *Microvelia sp.*, the snail *Physastra gibbosa* and three species of Protozoa.

Birds
39 species, 845 individuals.
The number of Black Swans has increased (90 counted). Three Magpie Geese were seen, but waterfowl generally were scarce with a flock of 50 unidentified ducks the only others seen.
There were many birds - including White-faced Herons, swans, swamphens and three Australasian Bitterns - in the extensive flooded flats between Moolap Station Road and Fitzgeralds Road. The water is about ankle-deep.
Other birds of interest were Eurasian Coot (a "raft" of about 200 birds on the Big Hole), Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo (2), Flame Robin (2), Grey Fantail (1), Yellow-faced Honeyeater (several small flocks flying NE using the trees near the outlet regulator to rest) and a large mixed flock of chats and goldfinches.
There were fewer small passerines (wrens, cisticolas) than previously, perhaps due to increased water level flooding some lake margins which they inhabit.

13. Thursday 10 June, 1999

Water level at regulator 0.65m.
Weather cold, strong NW breeze, partly cloudy. Heavy rain fell during the afternoon causing local flooding.
Water temperature 9°C(surface) 8°C(at 0.65m depth).
Water turbidity - visibility beyond 0.65m depth.

Amphibians
Common Southern Froglet *R. signifera* plentiful.

Fish
None noted.

Invertebrates
Several species common, notably the shrimp *Paratya australiensis* and another Eusiridae species of shrimp, the bugs *Microvelea sp.* and *Plea sp.*, water-flea (species of Chydoridae) and Cyclops *Microcyclops sp.*

Birds
27 species, 1121 individuals.
Large numbers of Black Swans (600), most on the section of flooded shoreline between Moolap Station Road and Fitzgeralds Road. They were feeding, along with swamphens (50), on cumbungi and other sedges which they uprooted in the shallow water. The water there was about 35cm deep. (Note - there are now few swans on the open water of Lake Connewarre where previously there were many hundreds.)
Waterfowl not common with 40 teal (sp?) recorded, however there were 50 Eurasian Coot on the Big Hole.
(From Matthews Road, many 100s of birds, probably Eurasian Coots, could be seen out towards the centre of Reedy lake. These were not visible from the shoreline overlooking the Big Hole.)
Other birds of interest included White-faced Heron (28), Australasian Bittern (3), Whistling Kite (4), Swamp Harrier (5) and Welcome Swallow (100).
The bitterns and herons were feeding in the flooded area between Moolap Station Road and Fitzgeralds Road where there were (obviously from their "watch-winding" calls) large numbers of froglets.

14. Thursday 12 August 1999

No accounts undertaken.

15. Thursday 14 October, 1999

Water level at regulator 0.74
Weather warm, slightly overcast, light NE breeze.
Water temperature 16°C (surface), 15.5°C (at 0.74m depth)

Amphibians
Common Southern Froglet *R. signifera* plentiful, Spotted Marsh Frog *Limnodynastes tasmaniensis* uncommon, and Southern Bullfrog *L. dumerili* uncommon.

Fish
Mosquito Fish *Gambusia affinis* common, and Dwarf Flatheaded Gudgeon *Philypnodon sp.* uncommon.

Invertebrates
Larvae of the dragonfly *Aeshna brevistyla* and the damselfly (a species in the Chlorolestidae family) were common, those of damselflies *Hemicordulia australine* and *Austrolestes sp.* uncommon. Water-boatman *Sigara sp.* and the fly *Podonominae sp.* were common.
The Freshwater Shrimp *Paratya australiensis*, seed-shrimp Canonidae family, water snail *Physastra gibbosa* and

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)
sow-bug *Phreatoicidae sp.* were also common.
An alga and four protozoa were also collected.

Birds
57 species, 1513 individuals
Birdlife was extraordinarily diverse, and it appears that the present water level (0.7m) is ideal for a wide range of species at this time of the year.
Black Swan (12 cygnets in 5 families), Australian White Ibis, probably Royal Spoonbill, Purple Swamphen (3 eggs in one nest) and Yellow-rumped Thornbill (5 eggs in one nest) were breeding.
Whiskered Terns were in great numbers (at least 500) and Black Swans (234) were plentiful. Sharp-tailed Sandpipers (78) and Latham's Snipe (2) were the only migratory waders.
Passerine numbers were low due to the water level flooding some of the grassy margins particularly between Fitzgeralds and Moolap Station Road. But this area has habitat used by crakes and rails.
Major excitement came from the sighting of an Intermediate Egret (Fitzgeralds Road to windmill) but other interesting birds were Pied Goose (12), Musk Duck (1), Great Crested Grebe (1), Baillon's Crake (3) and Pallid Cuckoo (2).

16. THURSDAY 9 DECEMBER 1999

Water level at regulator 0.55m.
Weather warm, overcast, strong south breeze.
Water temperature 19°C (surface) 18°C (at 0.55m depth).
Water turbidity - visibility greater than depth of 0.55m.

Amphibians
Brown Tree-frog *Litoria ewingi* tadpoles, uncommon.

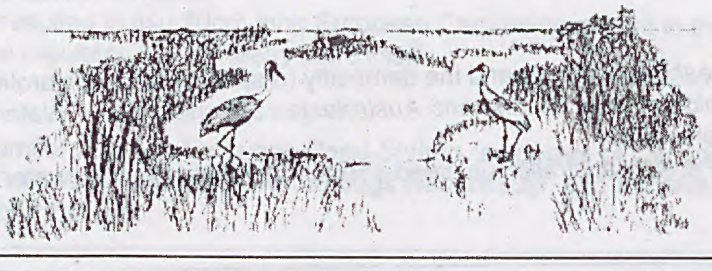
Fish
Redfin *Perca fluviatilis* uncommon, Small-mouthed Hardyhead *Antherina microstoma* uncommon.

Invertebrates
Caddis-fly (a species in Leptoceridae) and the bug *Alphelocheirus sp.* common, damselfly (a species in Lestidae) uncommon.
Freshwater Shrimp *Paratya australiensis* uncommon.
Freshwater Shrimp (a species in Eusiridae) and the seed-shrimp (a species in Candonidae) were common.
An alga and two protozoa were also common.

Birds
44 species, 1286 individuals.
Black Swan (92), Australian Shelduck (82), Australian Pelican (94), White-faced Heron (70), Australian White Ibis (87), Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (80), Masked Lapwing (47) and Whiskered Tern (425) were most numerous.
Australasian Bittern (2), Baillon's Crake (1), Brolga (2), Lathams Snipe (12) and Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo (8) were birds of particular interest.
Two species - White-necked Heron (12) and White-winged Black Tern (2) - were added to the overall list.
Passerines were in small numbers due to the water level.

Note : the water level over the year appears to have been close to ideal - 0.3 m in February, 0.52m in April, 0.65 m in June, 0.74m in October and 0.55m in December.
The lower level at the end of summer provides muddy shallows for waders while the greater depth in spring should encourage birds to breed.
Hopefully this regime will continue through 2000.

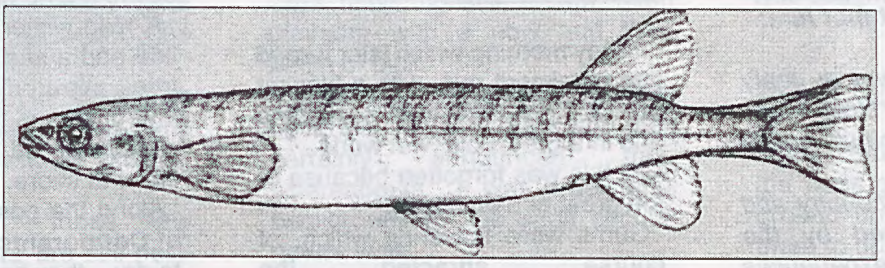
(N.B. The REEDY LAKE BIRD LIST will be published next month. Ed.)



A Galaxiid from Reedy Lake

...by Dave King

Unit 216/86 Church Street, Grovedale, 3216.



Common Jollytail *Galaxias maculatus*

Introduction

Amongst the aquatic fauna collection obtained during one of the series of surveys at Reedy Lake (38°-13'-12"S 144°-25'-36"E), on 8th June, 2000, a small fish was netted amongst a dense quantity of water weed. The density of the weed was such that the fish was not immediately known to have been caught. Superficial observation determined it to be a Glaxiid of some description. Upon close examination it was keyed out to be a Common Jollytail, *Galaxias maculatus*. Some 20 species of Galaxiid are found in Australia, mostly in the temperate southern region.

Description

The subject specimen was 90mm in length, which is probably about average for a diadromous specimen. They may reach a size of 190mm, particularly in land locked populations (McDowall,1980). It is a slender fish of tubular shape, characteristically having a single dorsal fin, set well back and immediately above the anal fin. All fins tend to be comparatively small and generally well rounded, all being soft rayed. The caudal (tail) fin is moderately forked. Pelvic fins are set slightly posterior of the body mid-point. Galaxiids have no scales. A lateral line becomes indistinct anteriorly. The head is conspicuously blunt, with the large eyes set high. A small mouth that extends to a point just anterior to the eye. Nostrils are noticeable by projecting in the form of a tube.

Colouration is a grey-green on the back and down the sides to the lateral line, with a series of vertical stripes of a darker hue. The lower sides and ventral surface are off-white with a silvery shine. Little pigmentation appears in all the fins.

Biology

Found in rivers, creeks, lakes and lagoons, it tolerates salinity. Adults migrate to estuaries at full or new moon, i.e. high tides, to spawn amongst flooded vegetation at the margins. Between the spring tides the eggs become stranded out of the water (McDowall,1980), and hatch on the second spring tide, or in some events it may be up to 8 weeks. The resulting larvae get taken on the tide out to sea for the winter, migrating back again in the spring to fresh water. Food consists of small aquatic animals, particularly the larvae of chironomid flies, i.e. midge and mosquito. This makes them a desirable member of the aquatic fauna, in contrast to the exotic, and mis-named, Mosquito Fish.

G. maculatus can negotiate strongly flowing rapids and vegetation that is not in water, by possessing strong mobility through a high degree of body flexing, much in common with the eel.

Landlocked populations exist in several lakes of the Western District, (Cadwallader,1983), these include Lakes Colac, Corangamite, Modewarre, Purrumbete and Wardiboluc. In this instance breeding is somewhat different to the diadromous groups. When, in winter and spring, the creeks feeding the lake are flowing, the adults will migrate up the creek to spawn. It has been determined that the size of individuals in these landlocked populations can be considerably larger than those not confined to lakes.

References

Cadwallader, P.L. (1983), *A Guide to the Freshwater Fish of Victoria,* Victorian Government, Melb.

McDowall, R.M., ed. (1980), *Freshwater Fishes of South-Eastern Australia,* A.H. & A.W. Reed Pty Ltd, Sydney.

JULY DIARY

...Joe Hubbard

An introduction to Joe for those members who have not met him:

My "base" is Newtown, a leafy urban environment, fairly close to the Barwon River, and five minutes drive from Geelong centre.

I moved here from the country and was agreeably surprised by the variety of natural history experiences available in a city back yard.

This explains the regularity of Newtown entries. Other entries arise from excursions undertaken to appease the "bush boy" in me – an incurable condition!

(Joe has once again taken entries from different years' diaries They are sequential in days if not in year!)

1.7.99 Newtown

July was swept in with a fly-through at tree top level by the **Brown Goshawk** which sent all the birds scattering at a rapid rate.

Little Ravens nest building still. **Pied Currawongs** have been keeping an eye on this activity. Their probing of the nest tree has caused the **Ravens** some concern – spending time to see the intruders off.

Sunrises continue to delight – really quite a brilliant display. A string of sunny days – not hard to take either!

1.7.98 Anglesea

Ironbark Basin walk to the cliffs near Point Addis.

Peregrine Falcon flying over heath/woodland near cliff edge – successful with hunt.

Yellow-faced Honeyeaters noticed through heath. Later a small flock (30) flew off in a purposeful manner.

Through binoculars watched flocks of black and white birds flying close to ocean's surface.

Varnish Wattle just starting to flower. Interesting to walk along the track and note the various plant communities.

Sweet Wattle in flower. Plenty of **Small Mosquito Orchids.**

I always look forward to the lookout up on the cliffs – wonderful view – beach, cliff, ocean.

2.7.97 You Yangs

Foggy morning which later turned into persistent rain, with a blanket of cloud over the peaks, leaving one in a grey, cold, wet world.

All this was forgotten because of the great bird-watching.

Gums were flowering which, of course, attracted the **Honeyeaters** including **Black-chinned** which are not usually found as far south. These birds sport a blue patch of skin around their eyes.

On arrival disturbed **White-winged Choughs** which had been ground-feeding. They flew up into the trees before flying off – probably 25. No sooner had these disappeared two more flocks repeated the activity – piping calls, louder alarm calls, the flight! A lot in one area.

6.7.99 Newtown

Another sunrise, another wonder! Yesterday's sunset – the whole sky pasteled in!

Up early enough to hear a winter's dawn chorus – and plenty to hear, **Spinebill, Honeyeaters, Silvereyes. Magpie-larks** undulating, **Red Wattlebirds** rasping, a few lovely notes from the **Songthrush**, the always vocal **New Hollands**, two **Rainbow Lorikeets** with their sharp calls, **Doves, Magpies** – the voices of the bush and dawn – and then for a few minutes the tall trees were bathed in the morning's golden light.

8.7.97 Newtown

Strong north wind – a wind you might think would deter birds from flight. Yet 6 **Little Ravens** spent a lot of time flying into it, across it, with it as if they were enjoying the experience.

Watched a **Magpie's** rapid glide with the wind, its controlled landing on a treetop, by-passing the target, turning into the wind, and dropping gently onto the perch – without blinking!

11.7.99 Limeburners Bay

Afternoon and a walk around the bay to get rid of the blues.

A mild winter's day – again! High tide and a sea like glass, with shore trees mirrored, the sky also, clouds and blue, and the water so clear you could see the schools of small fish close to shore.

Along the posts in the water a row of **Cormorants** hung out their wings to dry – they had found the fish too!

An unusual sight was 2 **Gannets** fishing – a dive and splash of water alerted me to their presence. They too must have approved of the fishing.

On a sand-spit near the Yacht Club, among the **Seagulls,** was a **Great** and **Little Egret.**

In the wetland adjoining the bay we saw 5 **Royal Spoonbills**, some **Chestnut Teal**, another **Little Egret**, and 2 **Yellow-rumped Thornbills** lining their almost completed nest. **White-fronted Chats** sat atop the **Shrubby Glasswort**.

14.7.97 Bannockburn Common

Another great day, so had to take advantage. A big flock of **White-winged Choughs** – 40 – quite a sight when they all flew off chirring their alarm call.

Yellow Gums in flower and feeding **Honeyeaters.**

Yellow Robins, the call of a **Kookaburra**, a **Brown Falcon**, very dark brown, 2 **Foxes**, bad news for the 2 **Quail** which walked across the track, and the **Noisy Miners** yelling out about the **Falcon's** presence.

On return journey, at Fyansford, a **Whistling Kite**, circled, then perched in a tree, calling.

15.7.98 Newtown

Been "off the air" for some time. One bout of "flu" after the other in the family – leaving little time or inclination for natural history.

Today we were up the back in the sun, an afternoon cuppa, when we had cause to admire a very friendly **Willie Wagtail**. I was about to just say "what a beautiful creature..." when the **Magpies** yelled out,

when the **Magpies** yelled out, warning of a raptor. The carking of 2 **Ravens** alerted us to its whereabouts – a lovely **White Goshawk** – they were doing their best to drive it off. It was around for some time – seemingly quite prepared to put up with the harassing.

Usually it's the **Brown Goshawk** which upsets the local birds – and much harder to see with its skulking habits.

And, by the way – those **New Holland Honeyeaters** are still nest-building.

20.7.98 Jerringot

Fine morning, and a chance for Dennis and I to dig out blackberries which were threatening to spread through the wetland. Some briar roses were poisoned – these were on the march too. These were all in what promises to be a small forest of **Red Gums**. The Field Naturalists had planted some but there were many self-sown seedlings – probably a product of the great flood.

We had our first sighting for this area of **White-browed Scrubwrens** (2).

A **Black-shouldered Kite** perched on the top-most branch of a tree uttering a most unraptor like call – a very quiet "cheep – cheep"!

At least 2 **Magpies** were carrying sticks for nest-building.

An **Australian Kestrel** hovered.

24.7.98 You Yangs

Afternoon, with a sea fog rolling in. We need not have worried – the mountains were in sunlight – warm away from the tops – and great for walking.

We found the first (for us) **Scented Sundews** in flower. There were many, tiny, unassuming **Early Nancies**.

Here and there, **Golden Wattles** were showing glimpses of yellow.

Sheoaks, with tassels of male flowers, yellowish-brown, spread like a carpet under each tree.

24.7.99 Moggs Creek

At least 3 **Wattles** flowering – **Narrow Leaf**(?), **Golden**, **Coast** and **Varnish**.

At the carpark some lovely patches of flowering **Nodding Greenhoods** and **Tall Greenhoods** ready to go.

And of course the **Ironbarks** were flowering still, cream fallen blossom with a now and then patch of pink.

Flowering **Ironbarks** always have their **Honeyeaters** and they certainly announced their whereabouts. It was a delightful background for the short circular nature walk.

Early on 2 **King Parrots** flew over, and towards walk's end, we put up a noisy screeching flock of **White Cockatoos**.

The cool damp of the forest provided ideal growing conditions for many species of **Fungi**, which included some striking **Coral Fungus**. Some heart-shaped, white fungi caught the eye.

Lunch under the gums and we returned via the Old Coach Road passing through a heathland, yellowed with a low shrubby wattle, livened with the pink and red of **Common Heath** and a circling **Wedge-tailed Eagle**.

Lovely coastal scenery that always brings you back – topped off with an **Albatross** skimming the waves off Airey's Inlet.

26.7.99 Inverleigh Common

Cool morning, with frost still on the ground in the shadows, with the sun doing its best to warm things.

There was much litter on the ground with the **Manna Gums** wonderful contributors – they shed long strips of bark. All this improves the growing conditions for terrestrial plants and gives them protection from grazing animals. Fallen branches and trees erect barriers too, and are good places to look for survivors.

We found plenty of **Trim Greenhoods** – some much like the **Striped** – and coming into flower, the finer looking **Dwarf Greenhoods**. In one area the ground was covered with lanceolate leaves of some orchid. Could be a good display later in the season. Also noted were single, ground hugging ovate leaves – again orchids.

Nodding Greenhoods were in bud – so we were reasonably content with the plant list. On return journey, we stopped to watch 3 **Whistling Kites**.

One flew up from the ground, then dropped what it was carrying, which was caught by the one flying below it.

26.7.98 Newtown

Two **White-browed Scrubwrens** in the back garden shrubbery, on the ground, doing what you would expect them to do!

Of course this sighting is a first for us and very unusual.

And the **New Holland Honeyeaters** by the front porch have babies.

27.7.96 Limeburner's Bay

Flowering along the walk were **Coast** and **Golden Wattle**, and **White Correa**.

A group of 11 **Royal Spoonbills** fed in the shallows, working in a line against an outgoing tide.

Nearby were 3 **Pied Oystercatcher**.

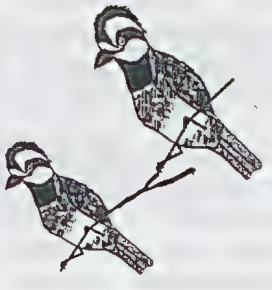
A **Nankeen Kestrel** hovered into the wind, annoyed by persistent **Silver Gulls** for no apparent reason.

A **Skylark** sang. A **Great** and a **Little Egret** fished together.

Many **Jewelled Beetles** were on a small **Euclaypt** near the car park. They were scattered over the tree but most were in a closely packed cluster at the base of the trunk.

28.7.98 Newtown

Two **Crested Shrike-tits** spent most of the afternoon in the lichen-covered pear tree. I was able to sit inside and admire these most attractive birds as they moved over the tree peeling off lichen and loose bark to find small white grubs.



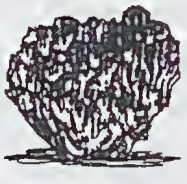
BIODIVERSITY GROUP REPORT

. . . Dennis Greenwell

Our excursion on **June 11th** was focused on fungi, as we knew from previous experience that early winter was usually a productive time. We had also the advantage that some rain had fallen recently, after a long period of drought and this, we thought, would add to our chances of success.

Our first stop was Ironbark Gorge, where we set off together along the track, shortly to split into two groups, one continuing along the top track, whilst the rest of us headed downhill, in the general direction of the sea.

Searching amongst the fallen trees and leaf litter, our efforts were amply rewarded by at least ten species of fungus, including several types of toadstool, Bracket Fungus and Coral Fungus



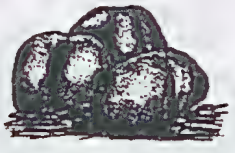
After a half hour or so of meandering through the bush, we were suddenly confronted with a crisis. At some time between where we had divided up on the top track and the moment in question, Dave discovered that his Global Satellite Positioning "Gizmo" was missing.

With the speed of a young greyhound, Dave was off up the path in the direction from which we had come, leaving the rest of us miserably following at a more sedate pace, forlornly trying to remember where we had seen Dave leave the path to turn logs or whatever, on the way down. Some chance!! We figured that this would really spoil the day for all of us, but especially Dave. These things aren't cheap.

I was the first to arrive back where we had parked our cars, feeling rather miserable. I wondered why Dave, Betty and Claire didn't look similarly depressed, because I was convinced that it was gone forever. However I was wrong. Dave had been lucky enough to find the spot close to where the tracks divided and it was still where he had left it, sitting on top of a post.

With our spirits revived, we had the inevitable cup of tea and set off for our next stop.

Our afternoon started at Gum Flat and here we had further success, finding more species of fungus, including many Horse Dropping Fungus which always seem to be found pushing their way actually *through* the bitumen to fruit on the edge of the road surface.



To finish the afternoon, Ron Mole suggested that we might be interested in visiting a spot just upstream of the bridge at Anglesea, where about a month before, he had seen some large *Boletus* during a midweek GFNC walk. Perhaps they would still be there.

Sure enough, Ron was able to lead us to the place, where there was a dozen or more, the largest weighing, I would estimate at least 5 kg. Sadly, however, they were well past their best and exuded a sticky, smelly liquid, so we decided to leave them where they were.

Shortly before we had come to the place where the *Boletus* were growing, I had noticed quite a large toadstool some 25 metres away, growing under a pine tree. As we came nearer, there proved to be not one, but scores of Fly Agarics. Some were quite small, but many others were up to 80 millimetres across and in perfect condition. This was an added bonus that we had not been expecting.

If you aren't familiar with the name of these toadstools, they are the "typical" red with white spots variety, as seen in fairy story books and much loved by those people who have concrete ones along with gnomes in the garden.

Well satisfied with our day, we headed for home around 4.00 o'clock with ample specimens for our meeting on the following Wednesday evening.

Dispite our sucess with fungi, we found very few insects.

Worshop Meeting June 14th

Eleven people attended the Workshop, two were new to the group. Andrew, who is a possible new member for the Club, is very keen on identifying specimens for the Fungimap group in Melbourne. He brought along a couple of very interesting Field Guides that we had not come across before. With the aid of these, we were able to identify many of the species found the previous Sunday. Yellow Coral Fungus, Fly Agaric and *Russula marial* from Ironbark Gorge. Horse Dropping Fungus *Pisolithus tinctorius*, 3 Coral Fungi – Salmon, Yellow & Orange, a Russula and a few others. At Anglesea, we found Fly Agaric under Pine trees, Mauve Coral Fungi *Romaria fumigata*, Slender Parasol Mushroom *Lepiota gracilenta*, the Bolete *Phaeogyroporus portentosus*, amongst others not identified.

Gordon McCarthy had collected a large, dark brown, woody fungus from Bannockburn Bush which was identified as a polypore *Amauroderma rude*. Those at the Environment Expo may have seen it on display.

(Has anyone seen a Caterpilla Fungi *Cordyceps sp.* lately?)

LIBRARY NOTES
. . . Betty Moore

This month the library has received No. 2 Issue of the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority's ***Barwon River Health Strategy Newsletter.*** It contains articles of local importance including native vegetation, research update on fish, aquatic bugs and toxicity and water resources.

A new Flood Warning System has recently been launched at Winchelsea. Through automatic flow and rainfall recording stations installed and upgraded along the Barwon, Leigh and Moorabool rivers, information is fed via telephone to the Bureau of Meteorology.

A Barwon River Bird Survey began last month. It involves bird counts at 25 different sites along the river from Geelong to the Otways, and will be conducted four times a year over the next two years. Anyone can join, and help would be welcomed.

WINGSPAN **Vol. 10 No. 2 (Birds Australia)**
"That HOLLOW Feeling," by Sarah Legge and Rob Heinsohn, is about Eclectus Parrots. Two things which make them unique among parrots are, firstly that the females rather than the males are a brilliant crimson and cobalt blue - the males are green - and the fact that the Eclectus is the only parrot known to breed habitually in co-operative groups.
"Threatened Species ACTION PLAN for Australian Birds" by Stephen Garnett and Gabriel Crowley. A revised Action Plan classifies twenty eight birds as Critically Endangered.

The special supplement this month is on Newhaven Station, a new reserve for Birds Australia, and is by Kate Fitzherbert.
Situated about four hours drive north west of Alice Springs, this station is five times larger than Gluepot.
"The area is extensive, complex and intact. It is home to at least fifteen nationally threatened species of animals and plants. It boasts ten vegetation communities and a wide array of landforms, none of which are well represented in existing reserves."
Best you read about it yourself, it makes fascinating reading.
The crux of the matter is that the property is now on the market and Birds Australia feels that this is an opportunity that should not be let go, and **please** can you help with a donation towards the purchase.

ENVIRONMENT VICTORIA Inc. **Issue 170, May 2000**
"Will the Government wait until someone is killed before it acts on forest violence?" asks Rod Anderson, Forests Campaigner.
The failure of Governments to adequately protect forests, *(see GEC News, May 2000 - article on Regional Forest Agreement - Otways)* and police inaction towards threats of death and rape, and extreme harassment leading to violence, vandalism and sabotage against conservationists, has instigated a pressing need for an independent inquiry into the situation.
There are other significant articles on the environment and peoples' rights.

GEELONG ENVIRONMENT NEWS **May 2000 (GEC)**
Get the latest environmental news on areas such as Otways Forest, Belmont Common, Golden Beach, Goandra Estate Rezoning Panel, Anglesea Issues, Alcoa Lease Management Plan, and Queenscliff Harbour Investigation - plus others!

MID-WEEK BIRD GROUP OUTING - 18.5.2000
. . . Ron Mole

8.30 am Cold and just Polly and me. Let's go.

Things looked better when we arrived at Grasstree Park, Kay, Rhonda and Don were already there. Roma and Ray arrived and we started off. The sky was overcast, the air was cold and the grass was wet.

The birds were not plentiful but they were interesting. Crimson Rosellas, an Eastern Spinebill, a Golden Whistler.
Apart from the birds, the ground provided evidence of a surplus of rabbits throughout the park.

In the open areas Superb Fairy Wrens were plentiful as well as Yelow-rumped Thornbills.

About this time we saw two women coming towards us. Turned out to be Penny Smith with a young woman she had met in the park. Sarah, a student in Environmental Tourism. Sarah joined our group for the rest of the morning. Penny was late because of a flat battery and a wait for the RACV.

The highlight of the day was a delightful close up performance by a Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater. It was harrassing a group of New Holland Honeyeaters. Flying back and forth between a few bushes and landing just a few feet from us, providing perfect viewing until we eventually had to move on.

Other sightings included a Cresent Honeyeater and a Black-shouldered Kite. Altogether 34 species were sighted. Roma found a very interesting cluster of small shiny black eggs on a teatree twig, as yet unidentified.

The sun finally broke through to round off a good morning.

NEXT MID-WEEK BIRD GROUP OUTING THURSDAYJULY 20TH LAKE MURTNAGHURT

Caroline MacAfee, who joined the GFNC recently, has a property on Barwon Heads Road which shares a boundary with Murtnaghurt – she has kindly offered to conduct us through the property. Through her close association with the area, she has gleaned much local information which she is more than happy to share; however she is still honing her bird identification skills and would appreciate help in this direction.

Meet at 8.30 am at K-Mart Belmont carpark (adjacent to the traffic lights). If it is more convenient to meet at Barwon Heads, please phone me for directions ***after July 15th.***
Polly Cutcliffe 5244 0182

Report of the illustrated talk given at the General Meeting, June 6, 2000 by guest speaker BRENDAN MARSHALL on

ABORIGINAL ARCHAEOLOGY

...Heather Cameron

(Part 1)

(This very interesting report has been divided into two parts by your Editorial Team.)

Brendan graduated in Aboriginal archaeology (or what used to be called hunter-gatherer archaeology) from LaTrobe University in 1986 and did post-graduate studies in the field of Pleistocene-late Pleistocene hunter-gatherer subsistence, specialising in the identification of Aboriginal food remains and cave deposits for the Pleistocene period. Most of his post-graduate research about the way Aboriginal people utilise formal resources was undertaken in southwest Tasmania.

After completing his post-graduate studies Brendan entered the world of consultant archaeology, one of the two careers open to people who do Aboriginal archaeology (the other career being an academic). Consultancy work typically involves identifying Aboriginal sites in the landscape and presenting management recommendations for them in relation to proposed development. One of the largest jobs Brendan did was a 1995 study in Angahook-Lorne National Park, near Anglesea, during which he was introduced to the Wathaurong community. He became very familiar with the community and loves to work in this area of Victoria whenever he can. Of all the places he has worked, he knows the archaeology of this area best.

To speak at our meeting Brendan had to contact the community to let them know he was going to be in their area to talk about sites that are basically their statutory responsibility, something that would not have been done by specialists in aboriginal archaeology ten years ago, partly because they were unaware of the aboriginal communities, and partly because the aboriginal communities were unaware of their archaeology. Today the 35 Aboriginal communities in Victoria have been broken up by Aboriginal Affairs Victoria into various regions.

Consequently Reg Abrahams, who is cultural heritage officer for the Southwest and Wimmera Cultural Heritage Program, accompanied Brendan to our meeting. Reg's job is to deal with land issues, detecting sites, and looking at old sites that have been reported 20-40 years ago to see if they need protection from erosion, and to get funding from AAV. He also plays a big role in education programs. The boundary of his area of responsibility goes from Lorne to Point Nepean, up to the Werribee River, to the Melton Reservoir, to Bacchus Marsh, down to Anakie, across to Meredith, to Dereel, down to Rokewood, Cressy, Beeac, Colac, then to Birregurra.

Reg has to deal with all the councils and land care groups in this large area regarding the *Aboriginal Relics Preservation Act 1972* and the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984*, which deal with Aboriginal sites, artefacts and middens, which are now all protected by legislation. For the past two years the Wathaurong/ Wuddawurrung community with the Greater City of Geelong have been in the process of forming a protocol and procedure for an archaeological survey to be undertaken prior to planned development (houses, roads, etc.) within 400 metres of a river, waterway, swamp or sea. Hopefully a sign-off to this protocol will take place in July.

Reg gave an example of skeletal remains found in May at Point Lonsdale about 50 metres from Buckley Park after a 90 year old house had been knocked down and excavations were being carried out for an underground carport. It was also a midden site, containing lots of shells and artefacts. This was an example of the type of development and ground disturbance which would come under the proposed protocol.

Brendan then showed us a number of slides illustrating the criteria used by archaeologists for identifying Aboriginal archaeological sites in the field when they get calls from the public to say that they have come across a midden, a scarred tree, or a collection of artefacts on the ground. Sometimes these sites are on private property, sometimes they have been known by generations of farmers, for example mound sites. A number of different site types are defined by archaeologists (by the materials that make them up) for identification purposes and for registering their findings with Aboriginal Affairs Victoria.

SLIDE SHOW

A typical collection of freehand manufactured flakes and chips. Of the dozen or so recognisable site types in Victoria, stone artefacts are probably one of the most common. There are only a few basic rules for identifying an artefact. The first question archaeologists ask is the type of stone – does it occur in the area naturally, and, if not, how did the stone get here. The second question relates to the morphology or shape of the stone, and any patterns which can be related to its possible manufacture, for example characteristics of the stone after two pieces of stone have been hit together. The primary characteristics are a bowl of percussion and a striking platform. Other characteristics relate to the edge, scarring, and how the flake is created. [Brendan demonstrated how a flake could be created.]

Other types of stone modification artefacts, such as ground-edge axes. Here there are also telltale signs that there has been human

intervention on the stone that you are looking at. The edges are ground down to form a sharper edge. Some have been formed into a waisted axe. Axes in this region were most commonly made from greenstone and basalt. Brendan has been lucky enough to find an axe still in situ, which is rare because, as an axe is instantly recognisable, most of them have been taken away from sites when they have been found. Ground-edge axes have been found in grave sites, indicating that people became very attached to their axes and were buried with them.

Grinding site type. Grinding sites are very common in South East Gippsland. The site shown was near Melbourne, on farmland which is now being developed for a housing estate. The grooves are formed by the rubbing of the basalt axe into the grinding material, which in this case is sandstone. It is thought that there may have been a lubricant such as water involved and the sites are quite often found near sources of water.

Grinding artefacts have often associated with the Neolithic period when people settled down, became more sedentary and started farming. The oldest known ground-stone artefacts (23,000 years) come from Arnhem Land, indicating that in Australia the technology is much older here than elsewhere in the world.

Ethnographic examples of ground-edge axes. These examples have been hafted onto wood by various means and provide clues to archaeologists as to how the axes were put together, as usually only the stone survives in archaeological sites. From this sort of information, archaeologists can start talking about a typology of axe types. Axes of this quality also provide information about the use of residues along their edges.

Mount William, north of Melbourne. This is the most famous quarry site in Victoria and a source of greenstone, a particular type of basalt. The greenstone was quarried by Kulin people and traded throughout eastern Australia. Some of the few descendants of the Melbourne group are related to the last traditional owner of the Mount William quarry.

(Part 2 next month.)

(The vote of thanks was given by Barry Lingham.)

CLUB NOTES
. . . Donna Wood

July 2000

The Club is still without a full time President, so you may notice a few different faces heading up the general meetings on a Tuesday night. Most of the Committee will be having a go at this 'job' until we can get someone to fill this position. My turn actually comes up next month, so if anyone wants to put his or her hand up, do it now!

At the August meeting I will be asking everyone to put on their thinking caps and to come up with ideas for future campouts, excursions and speakers. So if you can think of anywhere you would like to visit or anyone you would like to hear this is the time to do it. The planning of the GFNC program is a time consuming process and we try to arrange excursions and speakers that will appeal to most of the club members. I feel we get it right, but we would still love to have your input. Pens and paper supplied next month.

The Club has received a letter from the State Government stating that they do not support an international rowing course on the Belmont Common. It would seem this idea might finally be laid to rest. A new proposal has been put forward for the Barwon River to be widened and straightened slightly, and lengthened a little along the rowing course now used. This plan does not have the devastating environmental impact that the IWSC on Belmont Common had but it will take away some native vegetation, including a lot of the plantings that Barwon Water have done. GFNC committee will not be opposing this plan at this stage, but we are still looking into it. If this were to go ahead then it would probably stop any future plans for a more extensive proposal such as on Belmont Common.

GFNC is donating $50.00 to Workers for Wetlands to make up some nest boxes for Jerringot. Some of the existing boxes may also be moved to more suitable sites.

Dick Southcombe gave a small report on the recently held Friends of Seaview Park meeting. He was most pleased to see some Club members there. I had a walk along there today and found the signs to be informative; hope that others who might not have thought about the natural history of the area before get some benefit from them. Keep up the good work Dick and Friends.

A map of the Landy Field extension will be on the notice board tonight. I have not been around the river on this side so don't feel I can make too much comment, but others who have are disappointed at this proposal. Peter Byrne from Barwon Water is our guest speaker next month and the Club will be asking him about this proposal. Those who know the area believe a different approach to extending Landy Field could be taken.

Did anyone notice the Australian Naturalist Network sign displayed at the Expo? (There really was so much to see there. And not only corporate groups but most of the environmental groups from around our area. What a good time to 'network'.) In the next couple of months one each of these signs shall be placed at the four entrances to Geelong. They will also be promoting the GFNC.

BIRD OF THE MONTH
. . . Valda Dedman

LITTLE WATTLEBIRD

Name Little Wattlebird
Anthochaera chrysoptera

Description Large grey-brown honeyeater finely streaked with silvery-white above and below. No facial wattles. Rufous wingpatch, visible in flight. Wing and tail feathers tipped white.

Length 26-31cm.

Voice Variety of harsh notes, often repeated over and over.

Food Nectar, insects, plant sap.

Habitat Coastal woodland and scrub, especially with banksias.

Distribution Southeast and southwest Australia, Tasmania.

Geelong Coastal strip westwards from Ocean Grove. Resident, breeds.

Nest Loose cup of twigs in tree fork, often in banksia. 1-2 pink-red shiny oval eggs, blotched red-brown.

Breeding June to December.

*****

The Little Wattlebird has often been unjustly maligned because its strange unmelodious voice seems to override everything else about it. The sheer beauty of its plumage-patterning, its breast feathers resembling delicate long-handled silver spoons, is not noticed. Even the bird's aggressiveness takes second place to its voice.

John Gould's description of the Little Wattlebird was not particularly complimentary. He wrote of its harsh and peculiar notes "which have not unaptly been said to resemble a person in the act of vomiting, whence the native name of Goo-gwar-ruck. While thus employed it frequently jerks up its tail, throws back its head, and distends its throat as if great exertion was required."

There is said to be a wide variation of calls around the Australian coastline. It was at Ocean Grove that I first heard the Little Wattlebird and I thought it said "Kicky-kocky". Steve van Dyck would disagree. He wrote in *Nature* magazine (WInter 1988):

Come spring, and these bizarre birds would go berserk. Every banksia tree seemed to have one jerking and squawking on top. When the redundant Eastern Yellow Robins and Magpies eventually woke with the dawn-din they could scarcely compete with the wattlebirds' cacophony ... "cac-coph-phon-y, cac-coph-phon-y, cac-coph-phony."

The repetitive nature of the calls also grated on him:

To imitate one of the Little Wattlebird's songs all that is necessary is to recall a line from the old classic "Johnny's so late at the fair". Just whistle, ad nauseam, the line that says "He promised to buy me a bunch of ...", but don't go so far as the words "blue ribbons" otherwise you'll wreck the perfect excerpt.

Alison Hay wrote to *Wild Life* in 1951 saying that she had observed that good weather was assured when "cooked-apple, cooked-apple, cooked-apple!" echoed across the coastal banksia flats. But when the birds said "go-careful, go-careful, go-careful" with the "go" strongly accented, rain would be coming.

In Geelong Little Wattlebirds are uncommon but resident, with few breeding records. They are known mostly from coastal areas, regularly reported from Torquay and Lorne. After the Ash Wednesday fires of 1983 just two specimens were collected from the ocean beaches, whereas Red Wattlebirds were among the most common birds found, an indication perhaps of the relative abundance of the two species.

The birds are common west of Port Phillip where they frequent the coast banksia, *B. integrifolia*. In a garden in Melbourne's eastern suburb of Box Hill, Little Wattlebirds were not present until heath and hairpin banksias were planted in the 1960s. They then took over much of the garden, even driving off Red Wattlebirds. I have never seen one in the Geelong suburbs, but some fifty years ago Percy Wood wrote:

Wherever banksias, gums or tea-tree are blooming, here you will find this rowdy early riser in small parties, gorging on the pollen, nectar and the insects attracted by the perfumes of the blossoms. It is common in city gardens, if the necessary food trees are present.
Large numbers can be observed on the Geelong Golf Club links at Bell Park when the numerous banksias are in flower, the birds, with heads buried in the long tendrils of the pale lemon-tinted blooms, gorging on the boundless supply of their favourite food. (11.1.47, *Geelong Birds in Retrospect*, ed. Trevor Pescott)

A Little Wattlebird was recorded by Margaret Cameron at Deakin University in October 1995. An unusual record is from Werribee South in 1998. Belcher (1914) found a nest at the You Yangs, but the birds more usually nested in "ti-tree or similar swamp-scrub" in "the most secluded and wooded gullies". The cup nest is made of fine twigs and tendrils, thinly lined with bark fibre, plant down or fur. Built into an upright fork of a tree, often a banksia, it may be anything from one to several metres from the ground. Incubation takes twelve days and the young birds remain in the nest for about two weeks.

Little Wattlebirds are hosts to parasitic fly larvae that lie beneath the nestlings' skin and suck their blood, eventually pupating in the nest-lining or under leaves or bark.

P.A. Bourke called them birds "of personality, bold and pugnacious" and recalled that he had seen "one of a flock of Little Wattlebirds which attacked a Kookaburra, (&) ride on its back for over 100 yards when it left its perch" *(Elementary Bird Study)*.

Charles Belcher noted Little Wattlebirds in autumn and winter feeding with Red Wattlebirds on ironbark blossoms at Airey's Inlet, so look out for them now at Angahook.

BIRD OBSERVATIONS forJune 2000

-- compiled by John Bottomley

Observations were submitted by Ray Baverstock (RBa), Bela Bard-Brucker (BBB), John Bottomley (JB), Ray Beckworth (RBe), Jocelyn Calvert (JCa), Joan Cohan (JCo), Vernon Cohan (VC), Robert Hardie (RHa), Marilyn Hewish (MHe), Colin Goldburg (CGo), Barry Lingham (BL), Craig Morley (CMo), Rob Mckenzie (RMc), Gordon McCarthy (GMc), John Newman (JN), Hans Streefkerk (HS), Tony Trudgeon(TTu)

Species	Number	Date seen	Where	Observer
Little Penguin	15+	12/6/00	Point Lonsdale Lighthouse.	CMo
Black-browed Albatross	5+	21/5/00	Point Lonsdale Lighthouse. Also 10+ on 3/6/00 and 12/6/00	CMo
Shy Albatross	3	21/5/00	Point Lonsdale Lighthouse. Also 5 on 3/6/00 and 12/6/00	CMo
Fluttering Shearwater	1	21/5/00	Point Lonsdale Lighthouse. Also a few on 3/6/00	CMo
Australian Pelican	60	16/6/00	Point Henry.	GMc
Australasian Gannet	4 to 6	9/6/00	Western Beach	GMc
Great Crested Grebe	47	22/4/00	Stigaree Bay.	GMc
Great Egret	1	10/6/00	Moolap Salt Works.	RBa
Royal Spoonbill	49	22/4/00	Windmill Lane. Also 16 Yellow-billed Spoonbills.	RMc
Ruddy Turnstone	3	12/6/00	Point Lonsdale Lighthouse.	CMo
Eastern Curlew	3	21/5/00	Lake Connewarre delta.	RMc
Hooded Plover	10	19/4/00	Lake Victoria. Two juveniles.	RMc
Pacific Gull	3	10/6/00	Point Henry. Immature birds.	RBa
Arctic Jaeger	1	22/4/00	Stigaree Bay	RMc
Black-shouldered Kite	1	10/4/00	Eastern View.	RMc
Wedge-tailed Eagle	1	27/5/00	Stonehaven.	TTu
	2	18/6/00	Wensleydale.	JN
	2	18/6/00	Fyansford Quarry.	BL
Little Eagle	2	17/5/00	Leopold.	RMc
	1	1/5/00	Fyansford.	RMc
Collared Sparrowhawk	1	19/5/00	Leopold.	RMc
Grey Goshawk	1	18/6/00	Queens Park. White morph.	CMo
Black Falcon	1	28/5/00	Bacchus Marsh Road West of Lara.	MHe
Australian Hobby	1	19/4/00	Lake Victoria.	RMc
	1	25/5/00	Newtown.	CMo
Crested Pigeon	6	28/5/00	Bacchus Marsh Road at West Gateway Road. Also one on 10/6/00. Also seen by JB 21/6/00.	MHe
	2	10/6/00	Two km South of Bacchus Marsh	MHe
	2	6/6/00	Carrs Road between Bachus Marsh and Ballan Roads. Also on 10/6/00. One on 21/6/00	JB
Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	50+	4/6/00	Highton.	RBa
	37	19/4/00	Lake Victoria	RMc
	120	4/5/00	Leopold.	RMc
	110	12/5/00	Newtown.	RMc
	60+	3/6/00	Queenscliff.	CMo
Gang-gang Cockatoo	16	25/5/00	Highton.	RBa
	8	18/6/00	Newtown. Eating in a Liquid Amber tree.	VC
	5	22/5/00	Bannockburn Bush.	GMc
	3	6/6/00	Deakin University, Waurn Ponds.	JB
	4	1/5/00	Leopold.	RMc
Galah	200	5/11/00	Queens Park.	RMo
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	15+	1/6/00	Princes Bridge, Newtown.	RBa
	2	17/5/00	Highton. Being harassed by two Pied Currawongs.	RBa
Musk Lorikeet	50+	April and May	Leopold.	RMc
Purple-crowned Lorikeet	30+	26/4/00	Leopold.	RMc
Little Lorikeet	3	12/4/00	Leopold.	RMc
	2	Early June	Newtown.	CMo

(Continued on page 16)

(Continued from page 15)

Species	Number	Date seen	Where	Observer
Swift Parrot	6 to 8	10/5/00	You Yangs.	RMc
Red-rumped Parrot	12	6/6/00	Lara. Seen daily until 14/6/00	CGo
Orange-bellied Parrot	30	21/5/00	Lake Connewarre. Total for islands and South shore.	RMc
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	1	17/6/00	Queens Park.	JN
Barn Owl	1	5/6/00	Woloomanata. Road kill.	MHe
	1	13/6/00	Bacchus Marsh. Road kill.	MHe
	1	10/6/00	Ballan Road North of Anakie Road.	JCa, JB
Australian Owlet-nightjar	2	15/3/00	Bannockburn Bush	RMc
	1	1/5/00	Bannockburn Bush	RMc
	1	19/4/00	Carlisle State Park.	CMo
Varied Sittella	3	18/5/00	Bamganie State Forest.	RMc
Southern Emu Wren	Several	19/4/00	Carlisle State Park.	CMo
Striated Pardalote	3	22/5/00	Long Forest. One also on 17/6/00.	MHe
Speckled Warbler	1	10/5/00	You Yangs.	RMc
Yellow Thornbill	2	16/6/00	Lara.	CGo
Yellow-rumped Thornbill	Up to 8	28/5/00	Newtown. Also on 3, 10,11/6/00	CMo
Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater	1	18/6/00	Belchers Bush, Batesford.	BL
	1	17/4/00	Leopold. Four seen on 25/4/00	RMc
Black-chinned Honeyeater	3	10/5/00	You Yangs.	RMc
Pink Robin	1	12/6/00	DeMotts Road, Anakie. A brown bird.	MHe
	1	21/6/00	DeMotts Road, Anakie. Presumably the same bird as the record above.	JB
Flame Robin	3	3/6/00	Serendip. Two males and one female.	GMc
	9	19/4/00	Lake Victoria. Three males and six brown birds.	GMc
Scarlet Robin	4	18/5/00	Bamganie State Forest.	RMc
Red-capped Robin	1	30/5/00	Long Forest. A male.	MHe
Jacky Winter	1	12/6/00	Steiglitz.	MHe
Crested Shrike-tit	1	20/6/00	Lara.	VC
	1	12/5/00	Newtown on Barwon River.	RMc
Golden Whistler	1	20/5/00	Highton. In partial breeding plumage with white bib.	RBa
Restless Flycatcher	1	18/5/00	Bamganie State Forest.	RMc
Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike	1	20/6/00	Lara.	JCo
	1	3/6/00	Queenscliff.	CMo
	1	11/6/00	Newtown.	CMo
Dusky Woodswallow	15	10/5/00	You Yangs.	RMc
Pied Currawong	3	16/6/00	Grovedale	RBk
	1	15/5/00	Grovedale. Also heard 24/5/00.	RHa
Grey Currawong	1	17/6/00	Manifold Heights.	BBB
	1	10/5/00	You Yangs.	RMc
	1	12/5/00	Newtown.	RMc
	1	10/6/00	Newtown. Also 17/6/00	CMo
European Goldfinch	200 to 300	All June	Freshwater Creek. Flocks seen regularly in paddocks.	HS
Red-browed Finch	12+	11/6/00	Barwon River close to Balliang.	VC
Beautiful Firetail	Several	19/4/00	Carlisle State Park.	CMo
Diamond Firetail	1	17/6/00	Long Forest.	MHe
	5	10/5/00	You Yangs. Two immatures.	RMc
Silvereye	40+	5/6/00	Highton.	RBa
Blackbird	1	16/6/00	Highton. A bird in pied plummage.	JN
Song Thrush	1	13/6/00	Newtown.	CMo

The Report of Jocelyn Calvert's talk at the last Bird Group will be in next month's Geelong Naturalist. Ed.

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Printed by Ken Jenkin.

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